

thinking which is contained in Bill C-207. Government supporters seem to have shut their minds to any criticism, and this is another classic example. Bills that are bad in their origin, bad in their thinking, completely misbegotten and ill-drafted are still put forward as though they are works of art inspired by the greatest intelligence. It is as though they have been handed down on tablets of stone from on the mountain. For the umpteenth time the government is coming forward and saying, with its majority in the other place and its committees, that it has accepted further and further amendments. I am sure that if we started on another round, there would be further refinements.

● (8:20 p.m.)

This is a classic example of the advantage of taking a second look or even a third look at a proposition. If enough people expose the deficiencies of a particular measure, their arguments will finally be recognized: even people who were blind will see. If we take the original bill, S-17, and compare it with Bill C-3 as amended, the difference is like that between night and day. This does not say much for those in whose department the bill had its origin and it says even less for the cabinet committee which screened it. They must have been anticipating the holidays, or maybe the preoccupations of the Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans), then the Postmaster General, took up most of the time of the cabinet. As hon. members know, this bill passed through its early stages at the time the Post Office was going through its travail.

In any event the cabinet committee which screened the bill certainly muffed it. Then it went to the Senate. The eminent members of that body saw how bad it was and rewrote everything but the title. Again it has been presented, I would say with a considerable amount of slapdash. This is one for the hopper. I cannot say I am overly impressed. We have now reached the stage at which representatives of the sales finance companies and Senators in the other place are, I suppose, reasonably satisfied that they can live with this legislation. All right. These amendments improve Bill C-3. It is better now than when we saw it and when we passed it, and I am therefore prepared to recommend the motion before us to my hon. friends.

As I say, this is a classic example of second and third thoughts improving legislation. I only hope the same process can be applied to Bill C-207, because I believe the paternity of that bill is suspect, the product is even worse and the participation in debate in this House from the other side has been non-existent, as though hon. members opposite wanted to put the whole thing away from them, using not a 10-foot pole but a great, long 30-foot rod to stand away from it. And so they should. They have learned a lesson from Bill C-3. Let them apply it to Bill C-207.

Motion agreed to, amendments read the second time and concurred in.

Weights and Measures Act

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT

PROVISIONS RESPECTING UNITS OF MEASUREMENT,
INSPECTION, OFFENCES, ETC.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): moved that Bill S-5, respecting weights and measures, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When shall the said bill be read the third time?

Some hon. Members: By leave, now.

Mr. Basford moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): On the surface, Mr. Speaker, this appears to be a fairly innocent piece of legislation. It is a companion bill to one we have already passed, a measure which is presently before the other place, Bill C-180 dealing with packaging and labelling.

In essence, the trend of the amendments to Bill S-5 is to bring the Weights and Measures Act into line with modern practices and, in certain instances, to prepare the way of the introduction into this country of the metric system. There are several new clauses which are deserving of mention before the legislation receives third and final reading. Clause 10(p) provides for the application of sections of the Weights and Measures Act to coin-operated vending machines, machines which are now in widespread use. One of the difficulties likely to arise in connection with this amendment, desirable and necessary though it is, appears to be lack of adequate enforcement. I do not believe there are enough inspectors in the department at the present time to enforce the provision.

This is one of the points about which concern was expressed in committee, taking account of the great number of coin-operated vending machines in existence in Canada, more particularly those dispensing soft drinks, coffee and that kind of thing. We hope the minister will be able to reassure us in this regard, because there are occasions upon which these machines do, in fact, defraud the public.

New ground is also covered in clauses 18 and 32 of the bill which deal with oil deliveries. An attempt is made to correct a fraudulent practice, one which we hope is not widespread but which does take place from time to time, that is to say, the robbing of the public by oil vendors who deliver fuel oil to homes. Perhaps I can best describe this practice by quoting from report No. 17 of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs as follows:

● (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Anderson: . . . the practice of "riding the ticket" to which Mr. Basford referred earlier is the practice which we are trying to overcome.